

TRANSREPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Governor Unveils Draft of Long-Range Transportation Plan for Massachusetts

Governor Romney has mapped out \$31 billion of investment in all modes of transportation in the commonwealth in his draft 20-year transportation plan, unveiled on March 10. The plan, *A Framework for Thinking – A Plan for Action*, is based on the regional priorities of the state's metropolitan planning organizations and regional planning commissions.

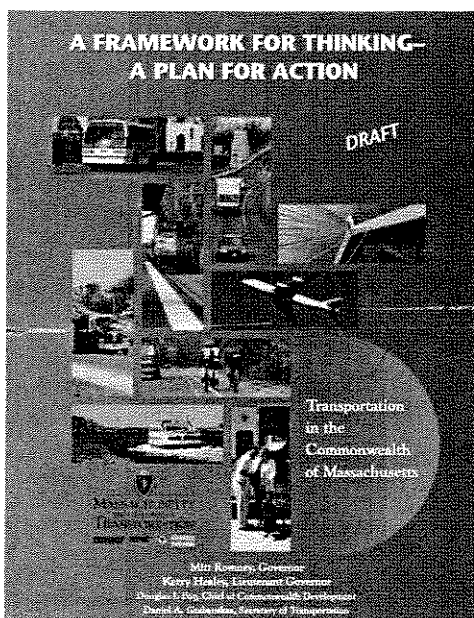
The plan acknowledges the vital role that state transportation decisions play in economic development. The governor said that good transportation decisions can improve the state's national competitiveness, shape housing and commercial development, and increase the amount of time spent with family and friends.

"This plan has some very specific goals for maintaining the commonwealth's competitiveness and quality of life," said former Transportation Secretary Daniel A. Grabauskas. "We look forward to continued cooperation with our partners in the state legislature and federal agencies as we move forward with this plan's implementation."

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Significantly reduce the number of structurally deficient bridges
- De-bottleneck known choke points and modernize high-crash intersections
- Achieve MBTA "State of Good Repair"
- Expand transit options
- Contain debt-service cost at or below current percentage of total expenditures

The document outlines \$31 billion in transportation priorities: \$24.5 billion in



"Fix-It-First" work and \$6.2 billion in major roadway, air transportation, and transit projects over the next 20 years.

One of the top Fix-It-First priorities is to invest more than \$1 billion over the next five years in fixing 600 of the state's structurally deficient bridges. At the current investment level, the number of deficient bridges would increase. The \$200 million annual investment doubles the state's current funding level.

The Fix-It-First priorities also include \$9 billion aimed at getting the MBTA into a state of good repair, with station renovations, more than 400 new buses and trains, track replacements, and an automated fare-collection system.

Improvements totaling \$12 billion are identified to ease traffic at choke points at many of the commonwealth's top 10 accident locations. This will ease travel on major highways. The plan includes improving Interstate 93 and 95 inter-

changes in Reading, Woburn, and Canton, expanding capacity on Route 3 South, addressing increasing congestion on Interstate 495, and improving safety on Route 2.

The plan is consistent with the MBTA's forward funding legislation, which was implemented with the intention of the MBTA itself paying for operations and investing in a state of good repair. Future MBTA expansion, under forward funding, would need to be paid for by federal, state, and local sources. The MBTA, which now relies on state sales tax revenue, fares, and community assessments, spends roughly one third of its annual \$1.1 billion annual budget to retire its existing debt, a situation that is contributing to budget problems at the authority.

The document states the MBTA can't sustain its future debt costs. "If we're serious about moving forward with mega transit projects, the only way we're ever going to get those done is if the state gets involved," said Sen. Stephen Baddour (D-Methuen), chairman of the Transportation Committee. "We need to move

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TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

In March, the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee prepared for the Agency and Municipal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Input Days,

reviewed a proposal for the Suburban Mobility Improvement Program, and gathered input from the MAPC subregional groups on priorities for the TIP and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

On March 31 the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to fund the Cape Ann Transportation Authority seasonal shuttle from the Ipswich commuter rail station as part of the MPO Suburban Mobility Improvement Program and approved the work scope for a regional freight study. The MPO approved a TIP amendment affecting several highway, transit, and bridge projects. The text can be found at www.bostonmpo.org.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

In March Beverly Woods, assistant director of the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO), briefed Advisory Council members and guests on the past accomplishments and future goals of the NMMPO. The NMMPO is one of the Boston Region MPO's six neighbor MPOs and part of the Boston urbanized area. It consists of the city of Lowell and the eight municipalities that surround Lowell. This coming year, their list of regional transportation projects includes the I-495 Corridor Study, conducted by MassHighway in cooperation with NMMPO and the Merrimack Valley MPO, which looks at particular traffic congestion and safety issues in portions of the section from the I-495/I-95 intersection near the New Hampshire border to the Westford/Littleton town line; the start of construction of Phase 1 of the Bruce Freeman Bike Path from the Chelmsford/Lowell town line to the Westford/Carlisle/Acton town line; the completion of the Route 3 North Improvement Project; and a proposal to extend commuter rail to Nashua, New Hampshire.

Staff provided updates on the development of the draft fiscal year 2006 UPWP and draft FYs 2006–2010 TIP.

The April 13 Advisory Council meeting will feature a briefing by the Executive Office of Transportation on the Statewide Transportation Plan and an MPO staff briefing on the Agency and Municipal TIP Input Days. Please see the calendar on page 6 for the meeting location and time.

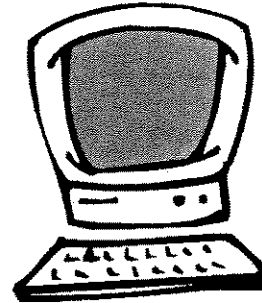
ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

In March the MBTA held the initial planning meeting for its Access Study. This study will provide an in-depth analysis of all of the Authority's varied services, with the goal of identifying and eliminating all shortcomings throughout the system. AACT Chairman James Oliver was named to assist with this project. It is expected to take 18 months to complete.

A presentation on the new automated fare-collection system will be made by the MBTA at the next AACT meeting, on April 27.

Any AACT member considering running for election as an AACT officer should contact Janie Guion, AACT coordinator, for nomination papers at (617) 973-7507, (617) 973-8855 (fax), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or AACT@ctps.org. The deadline for submitting nomination papers is April 27, 2005.

Road and Bridge Project Info Just a Click Away



Web users can now access the latest information on MassHighway's road and bridge projects across the common-

wealth through a completely retooled Web site and new Internet services designed by the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) and MassHighway. The updated project information and the new Web services, which were unveiled on March 1, incorporate informational resources from a number of Internet sites into one shared Web site. To access the site, visit www.mhd.state.ma.us/ProjectInfo/.

In 2000 the Commonwealth and MassHighway entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Massachusetts Association of Regional Plan-



ning Agencies (MARPA) in which they agreed to make project information more readily available to the public. One of the Web services accessible on the updated site is comprehensive information on MBTA services that includes a trip planning feature and schedule information for all transit modes that the MBTA offers.

EOT's Web site also allows Web surfers to access information on the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission, the 15 regional transit authorities in the state, Massport and Logan Airport services, and various commuter and recreational boating opportunities, as well as other transportation-related sites. A new online trucking-permit application is also available to truckers who want to move loads over Massachusetts roadways.

Call for Nomination Papers for MPO Election; Two Seats to Be Decided in May

Now is the time for municipalities to step forward if they want to have a vote on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The local-member election process is underway, and the MPO is encouraging all of the eligible municipalities in the region to ramp up their involvement in transportation planning by seeking membership.

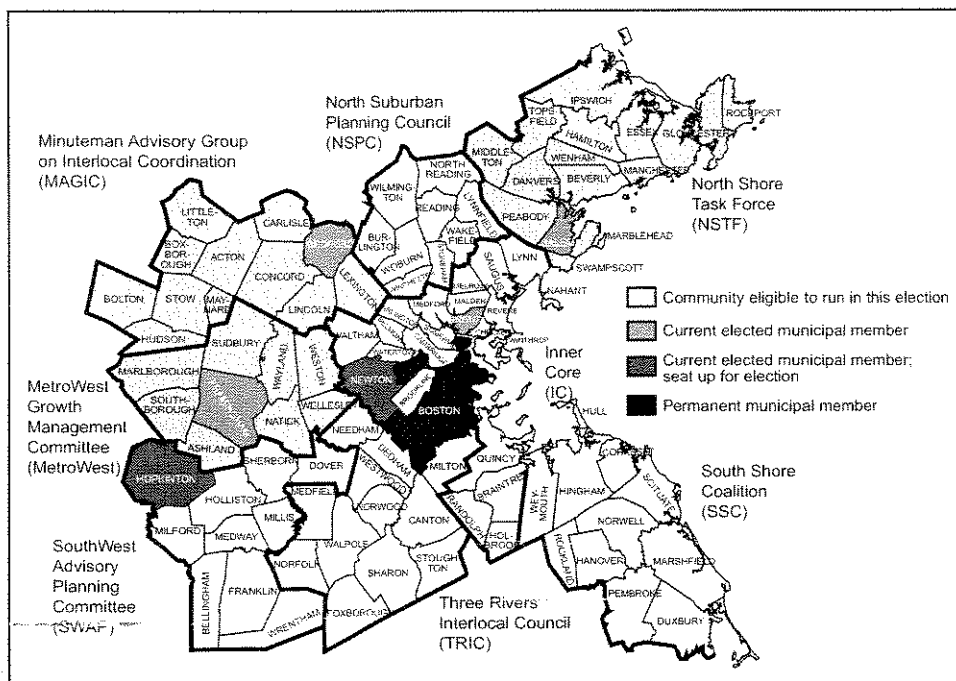
Each year, one city and one town are elected to three-year terms in a process in which all 101 municipalities in the MPO region can vote.

In this year's election, members for the seats now held by Newton and Hopkinton are to be elected.

The two regional members of the MPO, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the MBTA Advisory Board, conduct the election process on behalf of the MPO. If you have questions about the MPO elections, feel free to contact Barbara Lucas of MAPC by e-mail at blucas@mapc.org or by phone at (617) 451-2770, ext. 2043. Election information may be viewed at www.mapc.org/whats_new.

The MPO wants geographic diversity in its local members and is reaching out to all eligible parts of the region for candidate municipalities. Though local members act from a regional, not a single-community perspective, geographic diversity on the MPO is a benefit.

Election rules stipulate that no MAPC subregion, except the Inner Core, can have more than one seat on the MPO at a time. So, municipalities from MAPC



subregions currently represented on the MPO by members that are not up for election (North Shore Task Force, MetroWest, and Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) are not eligible to run this year. All other municipalities are encouraged to do so.

Notification of the election and a call for nomination papers were sent to municipal chief elected officials on March 21.

Here's how to run for a seat on the MPO:

- Gather nomination signatures from five chief elected officials in the region and submit to MAPC by 5:00 P.M. on April 20; an official may sign for only one city and one town.
- Prepare candidate's statement.

- Return your nomination materials by the deadline; they are the source of an informational mailing about all candidates sent to all municipalities.

- Participate in the candidates' night.
- Vote: the election will take place at the MAPC annual meeting, 9:00 A.M., May 25, at the Sheraton Lexington Hotel, 727 Marrett Road, Lexington.

Municipal officials and interested members of the public are always invited to participate in MPO deliberations and decisions by attending and speaking at MPO and Transportation Planning and Programming Committee meetings, workshops, and open houses. Comments and input are also welcome at www.bostonmpo.org

■ Statewide Plan *cont. from p. 1*

from the planning stage to the construction stage and get these projects off the drawing board."

The plan explains that after Silver Line Phase III is completed, the Commonwealth will honor its role in funding future system expansion, including the remaining Central Artery/Tunnel transit commitments.

Intermodal centers, freight facilities, air-

ports and seaports, and bikeways are also addressed in the plan.

More than half of the funding identified in the document, \$15.8 billion, comes from the federal government, with \$10.2 billion from the state's capital budget, \$4.4 billion from the MBTA's capital budget, and \$279 million from other sources. The plan would give high priority to projects that use federal dollars and

to those with "comprehensive corridor plans" that would expedite permitting, create zones for new housing, and have strong local support.

Mr. Grabauskas also said the administration plans to gather feedback during the next several months and make revisions based on that advice.

New Terminal Opens at Logan Airport

After almost three years of construction, Logan International Airport's Terminal A opened to the public on March 16. The \$400 million project consolidates all Delta Air Lines operations, which include Delta, Delta Connection, Delta Shuttle, and Song, into one location that offers unprecedented technologies and conveniences. All Delta flights formerly operating out of Terminals B and C are now operating out of Terminal A.

The new terminal has 686,000 square feet of space and is comprised of a main terminal building and a satellite building,

which are connected by a 602-foot underground tunnel with moving walkways that transport passengers between terminals and parking garages more conveniently.

Between its main building and satellite gate facility, Terminal A has 18 aircraft gates, giving Logan a total of 94 gates.

Terminal A's main building has a sleek, light, transparent design, which includes brushed-metal ceilings and shatter-resistant glass walls that allow for expansive views. Although modern, the terminal's interiors reflect a Boston image with imprinted copper-toned panels in the ticketing hall. In addition to check-in counters and self-service check-in kiosks, the ticketing hall has phone banks, security lanes, and a Delta Crown Room Club, which provides a variety of travel services.

The terminal's satellite gate building has a flexible plan which can accommodate a large variety of aircraft types, large passenger areas with expansive views of the airfield, and a retail/food court. In addition, shopping and dining options featuring national and regional restaurant and retailer chains are found throughout the complex.

Expected to be a national model for passenger- and environment-friendly airport facilities, Terminal A is Logan Airport's first truly sustainable, or "green," structure. It is constructed of sustainable

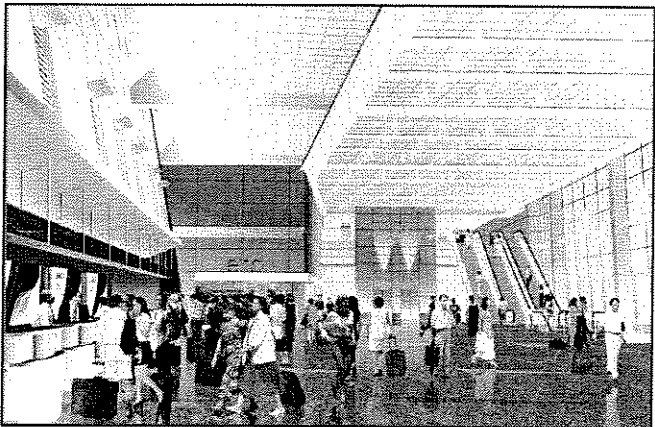
materials such as pre-cast concrete, wood panels, and recycled products. It was designed so as to achieve a LEED rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. The LEED rating system is a voluntary, consensus-based, national standard for developing high-per-

formance, sustainable buildings. The sustainability strategies at Terminal A include—in addition to the use of recyclable materials—natural lighting, energy conservation, and alternative fuel utilization.

For more information, visit Massport's Web site at www.massport.com.



Exterior and interior views of the new Terminal A (artist's rendering)



MPO Celebrates Launch of Suburban Mobility Project

On March 18 Boston Region MPO members watched with great pride the launch of the first funded project under the MPO's new Suburban Mobility Improvement Program. Operated by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA),



TLC ceremony in Southborough

the new service, called "The Local Connection" (TLC), was celebrated with two ceremonies held in Southborough and Marlborough. The events were attended by local officials from both the City of Marlborough and the Town of Southborough, state and federal officials, Boston Region MPO members, WRTA staff, and the public.

Funding for the service is provided by the Federal Highway Administration, the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Transportation, and MassHighway through the Boston MPO's Suburban Mobility Improvement Program. This dial-a-ride, on-demand service will provide service to residents and commuters of Marlborough and Southborough, making it possible to travel by public transit to many local destinations such as shopping plazas, employment centers, medical facilities, and the MBTA commuter rail station in Southborough. Service is provided to the Marlborough and Southborough downtown areas; along Routes 9, 20, and 85; and the area west of I-495 and south of Route 20 in Marlborough. It also extends into the Route 9/I-495 area of Westborough. The new service is designed to connect with Local Inter-Framingham Transit (LIFT), particularly the LIFT 7 route to area malls and downtown Framingham.

The service operates between 6:00 A.M.

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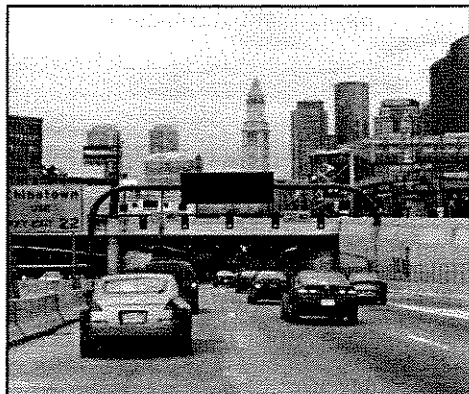
Central Artery Project Attains Two Milestones



The widening of the Central Artery (I-93) southbound was completed on March 5 with the addition of a

fourth lane on the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge and in the I-93 south tunnel. This tunnel opened in an interim configuration in December 2003 so that work crews could continue to demolish the old elevated Central Artery and complete construction on the tunnel below.

Over the last 14 months, there was a series of traffic shifts on I-93 southbound as work on the renovation of the former Dewey Square Tunnel continued. With the full opening of I-93 southbound, the highway is now in its permanent



The I-93 southbound tunnel

configuration, with three lanes of traffic traveling through the left-hand side of the Dewey Square Tunnel and a new, two-lane exit through the right-hand side of the tunnel for traffic headed to I-90 (the Massachusetts Turnpike) westbound and Albany Street.

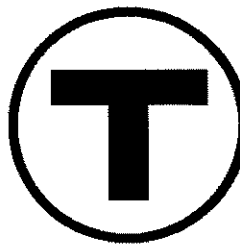
At its widest point, the newly renovated tunnel handles six lanes of traffic. As part of the new roadway configuration, the Turnpike Authority also extended the high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lane on I-93 southbound (north of downtown Boston) more than half a mile from where it used to end (on the lower deck of I-93) onto the Zakim Bridge, and widened the on-ramp from the Tobin Bridge to I-93 southbound.

MBTA Implements Bus Service Improvements

On March 26 the MBTA implemented a number of changes to its bus service based on comments received as part of its biennial Service Plan. These service improvements are designed to provide more efficient, reliable, and comfortable bus service. These improvements come at no cost to the Commonwealth's taxpayers, since only very lightly used bus trips will be discontinued.

The Boston neighborhoods of Dorchester, Hyde Park, Mattapan, Roslindale, and Roxbury and the cities and towns of Braintree, Brockton, Holbrook, Milton, Quincy, and Randolph have improved service. The following routes have modified schedules:

- #24 now runs more frequently on Saturdays.
- #26 now serves Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street when #21 is not operating on weekdays and Saturdays.
- #27 now runs less frequently during midday weekdays and on Saturdays.
- #30 has more service during the morning rush hour and serves Forest Hills all day on weekdays.
- #31, #36, and #39 provide earlier service to downtown Boston on Sunday mornings.
- #32 has more service during the morning rush hour.



MBTA bus

- #33 and #40 run later on weekdays.
- #40 and #50 have new Sunday service.
- #40 outbound and #50 inbound have hourly trips.
- #42 now operates to Dudley Station Monday through Saturday, with increased frequency for parts of the day.
- #201/202 has new weekend bus service linking Dorchester and North Quincy.
- #211 has new Sunday bus service in Squantum and Wollaston.
- #216 has more Sunday bus service in West Quincy.
- #225 has more morning rush hour service on Quincy Avenue.
- #236 has improved service to the South Shore Plaza shopping mall.
- Many bus routes departing Quincy Center have later weeknight service.
- Many bus routes in Braintree, Brockton, Dorchester, Holbrook, Milton, Quincy, and Randolph now have both earlier and later service.

MBTA bus fares are still 90 cents, and free transfers allow two rides for the price of one. For more information, consult the spring 2005 (red) printed bus schedules, call the MBTA at 617-222-3200 (TTY 222-5146), or visit www.mbta.com.

On April 2 the new, permanent connection from I-90 westbound to I-93 southbound opened, dramatically improving the flow of traffic for motorists leaving Logan International Airport. Motorists no longer have to negotiate a hairpin turn at the temporary Exit 23, which often caused backups on I-90 westbound. The new connection, via Exit 24 in South Boston, features a longer off-ramp

with a more gradual turning radius and handles cars headed to I-93 northbound and southbound from both I-90 westbound and South Boston surface streets.

The Central Artery/Tunnel project is now 96 percent complete and is scheduled to be closer to full completion by September 2005. For more information, visit www.masspike.com.

MEETING CALENDAR

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings this month. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting locations.

MEETINGS AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

Thursday, April 7
Boston Region MPO 9:00 A.M.
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Municipal Input Day
 Conference Room 4

Thursday, April 7
MBTA Board of Directors 1:00 P.M.
 Room to be assigned; check second-floor information board on day of meeting.

Wednesday, April 13
Regional Transportation Advisory Council 3:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 4

Thursday, April 21
Boston Region MPO 10:00 A.M.
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150
MBTA Rider Oversight Committee Meeting 4:30 P.M.
 Conservation Law Foundation
 62 Summer Street, Boston

Wednesday, April 27
Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) 1:00 P.M.
 Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Thursday, May 5
Boston Region MPO 10:00 A.M.
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Work Session
 CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

OTHER BOSTON AREA MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 5
New Charles River Basin Citizen Advisory Committee 4:00 P.M.
 Conference Room 1
 185 Kneeland Street, Boston

Wednesday, April 6
Coalition for Zoning Reform: Second Massachusetts Forum on Land Use Reform 10:00 A.M.
 Suffolk University Law School
 120 Tremont Street, Boston
 Registration required. Visit www.apcc.org or register at the forum at 9:30 A.M.

Friday, April 8
Move Massachusetts: Statewide Transportation Plan 8:00 A.M.
 Brown Rudnick Berlack Israels
 One Financial Center, 18th Floor
 Dewey Square, Boston

Thursday, April 14
MBTA Public Meeting: Morton Street Commuter Rail Station Rehabilitation 6:00 P.M.
 Mildred Avenue Community Center
 5 Mildred Avenue, Mattapan

Tuesday, April 26
Central Artery/Tunnel Project North End Construction Update Meeting 5:30 P.M.
 Nazarro Community Center
 20 North Bennet Street, Boston

Meeting dates and times are subject to change: please call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional transportation meetings open to the public are listed on the Boston Region MPO Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

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and 6:30 P.M. and is on-demand. To request a pickup, call (877) RIDE-TLC between 9:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. A one-way fare is \$2.00. For more information, visit the website at www.ridetlc.com.

For fiscal year 2005, the Boston Region MPO approved funding for the Route 128 Business Council's Anderson RTC shuttle and the Ipswich summer shuttle. The MPO is currently reviewing an application for the proposed LIFT Route 9 in Framingham and Natick. For further information on the Suburban Mobility Improvement Program, contact Barbara Lucas, at (617) 451-2770, ext. 2043, or blucas@mapc.org.

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